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A SERIOUS
ADDRESS
TO THE
COMMON PEOPLE,
ON
ACCOUNT
Of the late
INSURRECTION

AT
HEXHAM, MARCH 9, 1761.

*Published for the BENEFIT of the POOR
of the Parish, where it was preached.*

The THIRD EDITION, Corrected.

NEWCASTLE:

Printed by J. WHITE, for W. CHARNLEY.
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[Price THREE-PENCE.]

A D R E S S

TO THE

COMMON PEOPLE



INSTRUMENT

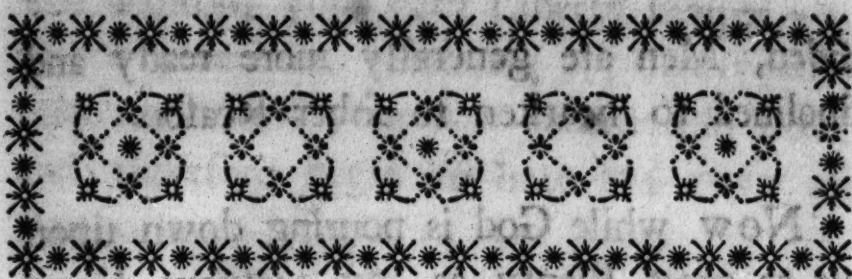
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A SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

ROM. xiii. 1, 2.

Let every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers. For there is no Power but of God: The Powers, that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.

HAVING discharged the several Duties, annually due at this Time, to the Memory of our dear Lord; I take the very first Opportunity to bespeak your serious Attention upon a Subject made necessary alas! by too many melancholy Events. And I do this the rather now, because when the Passions have subsided

sided, Men are generally more ready and inclined to hearken to sober Reason.

Now while God is pouring down upon us as great Plenty as any virtuous Heart can wish, and much more than the best of us deserve; while we are just about to reap the happy Fruits of many signal and glorious Victories; and have before our Eyes all the inestimable Blessings of a long and virtuous Reign; is it not extremely strange, that there should be any Murmuring in our Villages, or any Complaining in our Streets? Yet such indecent Murmurings, such loud Complaints have been, as if the Government reigned only by Tyranny, and the Magistrates ruled by the heaviest Oppression.

O FOOLISH People, and unwise! How unmindful are you of the rich Blessings of Providence? How ungrateful to the best of Kings, and the mildest Administration? How little have *you* felt of the Miseries of War? How happily ignorant are you of the Hardships and Cruelties of despotic Governments? Alas! I fear, your very Prosperity makes
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you wanton; your very Liberty tempts you to be licentious. You are apparently discontented with your low Situation in Life; and therefore begin to hate and envy all Authority.

FOR do but turn impartial Eyes back upon your late Behaviour: How inconsistent was it with the amiable Character of *Britons*? How contrary to every Appearance of loyal Subjects? And how unworthy the Behaviour of reasonable Men; but much more of sober Christians? What Infatuation could move you to such daring, such treasonable Attempts? Why were you so deaf to every friendly Remonstrance; nay and esteemed those your Enemies, who told you the Truth; and who endeavoured to save you from one of the blackest Crimes, and from apparent Destruction. For know, that the mildest Government beareth not the Sword in vain.

BUT it is much more the Province of my sacred Office to convince you of your Sin, than of your Folly. And although, I hope,
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many of you are, by this Time, returned to sober and better Minds; both by the calm Suggestions of your own Thoughts; and by the seasonable and very pathetic Discourse, which has been put into some of your Hands; yet to discharge myself of my own private Duty among you, as well as to demonstrate my ardent Affection for you, and most hearty Attachment to your Interests; I shall now repeat to you, assembled together in Public, much of what I have suggested, as Opportunity offered, to many of you in private.

I HAVE often told you that in order to become good Citizens, you must first become good Men. You must get right Notions concerning the Propriety of your Situation in Life; and of the several leading Duties, which your Creator requires of you, in it. For you are to know, and you must lay it seriously to Heart too, that God alone out of his infinite Wisdom, has ordained the several Orders and Degrees, the several different States and Conditions of Men, in this World. Your Creator must
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certainly be best acquainted with all the Ends and Designs of your Creation; and what Place, in the grand Scale of Beings, is most proper for you.

Now since God has made us, and not we ourselves; since he has appointed us all our fit Stations on Earth; if we complain of any Inconvenience, which arises *necessarily* out of our particular Station; our Clamours reach the very Heavens, and go much higher than against an earthly Throne. It is not an human Government that caused you or me to be born of such and such Parents, or in such and such a Country; all this was the immediate Appointment and Handy-work of God; determined by his Wisdom, before we came into the World; and fixed by his Sovereign Power, when he gave us Being. Grant you that your low Station may expose you to some Hardships in Life, Will you lay these to the Door of any Magistrate? If God has appointed you for the meaner Purposes of Life; and for the harder Offices of Society and Government; will you rebel against
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your Superiors, upon this Account? Is it reasonable you should charge *them* with Severity and Oppression only for maintaining that Order, and due Subordination, which God has constituted, for the social Health and Happiness of the human Race? What is this else, but to attribute *that* as a Fault to your Governors, which is in Reality, the wise System of your Creator. For human Affairs in general, and the natural State of Government in particular, *necessarily* and *essentially* require different Stations, and different Orders among Mankind. "In a great House (says the Apostle) there are not only Vessels of Gold, and of Silver, but also of Wood, and of Earth; some for better, some for more ordinary Uses." 2 *Tim.* ii. 20. The Comparison is very obvious and elegant, and therefore it is a Thought you often meet with in the sacred Writings, *Rom.* ix. 21.

Now what I have been saying is to convince you, that there is no Power, but what is of God. The Powers, that be, are ordained of God. Higher Stations are not

not founded on the Pride of Man; but are a gracious Institution of the universal Creator; calculated for the Good of the Whole, as well as for the Benefit of every Particular. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation." Whatever Christian opposes the supreme Authority of the Country he lives in; opposes the immediate Act of Divine Providence, and as far, as in him lies, fights against God; and of Consequence, must expect the Punishment due to so atrocious a Crime.

THIS is the Apostle's plain Reasoning. And therefore though you may perhaps in Cases, which so nearly touch yourselves, give little Credit to the Reasoning of your Ministers and others; yet for Heaven's Sake, renounce not the Authority of an Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures, you know, are intended to make you wise unto Salvation; wherefore if you allow your Prejudices to prevail so far, as to turn a deaf Ear to their prudent Instructions;

tions; and wilfully follow the Impulse of blind Passion, Alas! what must become of you, in the End? You teach your very Children to honour and obey the King, and *all that are put in Authority under him*; to submit themselves to all their Governors, Teachers, spiritual Pastors, and Masters; and to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their Betters; let me beseech you then, to bethink yourselves, how *your* late Behaviour comports with these noble Rules of Conduct, which you learn'd and profes'd, in your very Childhood. Does not the Reflection of this put you to the Blush?

MANY of you may vainly imagine, perhaps, that you meant no Harm; nor did you go with any bad or bloody Designs. But you should reflect, that to subvert the Laws of your Country is to undermine your own Safety. You plainly see what it is to follow a Multitude to do evil. The Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water: When you once enter upon it, you cannot tell where it will end. A very devouring Flame may arise from a small

small Spark. For evil Communication will always corrupt good Manners. When you partake in a Crime you must not expect to be quite clear of the Guilt. How many wrong Acts did you commit, in doing yourselves Right, as you were pleased to call it? Nay even to excuse, is in some Measure to approve of a bad Undertaking; how much more then, did your Presence give Countenance to this mad and wicked Action? You may judge from the melancholy Fate of *Korah* and his Company, *Numb. xvi.* how extremely hateful this Spirit of Disobedience is, in the Sight of God, as well as Man; where no less than near fifteen Thousand Souls were cut off, by the very Hand of the Almighty himself, for being concerned in a *Mob* against the just Authority of their Superiors; as you may read at large, in the 16th Chap. of *Numbers*.

BUT the Militia Law you say, is a very bad one, and therefore ought to be repealed. How; are *you* the only proper and infallible Judges, what is, or is not, expedient, for the Good and Well-being of

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the whole Community? Pray how came Men of your Rank, by this extraordinary Knowledge? In what School have you learn'd all the Art of Government? Why did you not shew your great Wisdom, much earlier, in framing Laws, and conducting Matters of State; which peradventure might have saved this Nation infinite Expence and Trouble? But in sober Reason, can you really think yourselves equal to the great and arduous Task of ruling Kingdoms? Are you, in Truth, so well acquainted with all the jarring Interests of Mankind, as to be able to settle them to the Satisfaction and Content of every Individual? Alas! do you not see the most glaring Impropriety (to say no worse) in your taking upon you to censure, to judge, and condemn what is done, by the Rulers of our People. We live easy and happy in the Country: Our Thoughts, and our Cares extend but to our private Affairs: The Fruits of the Earth are the proper Objects of our Ambition. When Heaven therefore blesses us with Plenty, in our Baskets, and in our Stores; what have we
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to do, but to receive the Blessings with chearful and grateful Hearts; and to send up to Heaven, in return, the pure Incense of Praise and Thanksgiving.

MATTERS of State are much above our Capacity: That high Province, by the very Appointment of Heaven, belongs to much abler Heads: And though in the various complicated Scene of human Affairs, some Appointments of the wisest Governments may bear hard upon some Individuals; yet we can not, and therefore must not, conclude from hence, that the Law itself is not good, nor convenient upon the Whole.

SURELY if we receive the many, many Advantages of good Laws; we ought chearfully to submit to some small Inconvenience, in *one* Case; where the general Benefit and Safety of the Nation clearly demands it of us. But whatever you may think of the Act, which has occasioned this melancholy Scene of Confusion; yet it is well known, that there never was perhaps a Law framed with more Deliberation, nor
with

with better Views, or more national Intentions. Pray who can expect but to suffer something, under God's general Judgments? And which of the Divine Judgments, is more general, or more fatal in all its Consequences, than the Calamities of War? Yet how little have you felt of this direful overflowing Evil?

Now if the very Law, which you complain of, has kept Slaughter, Rapine, and Plunder at a Distance from you; do you esteem all this as Nothing? Could you purchase so great a Blessing too dear? And yet, I am ashamed to mention the Trifle, it has cost you; a Trifle, I mean, to every Individual, who took the obvious Method of joining in common with their Parish, to prevent the greater Expence, which might perchance otherwise fall to their Lot. And if Perverseness of Temper withheld any of you from the prudent and safe Scheme, who can you blame but yourselves?

BESIDES what real Hardship there was in the Act, it is now, in all Probability, hap-

happily over: Because as it will be near two Years before there can be another general Allotment; we may comfortably hope, in that Time, the War will cease; and then if it is even thought proper for you to learn the Use of Arms, for the future Defence of your Lives and Liberties; yet you will learn it nearer Home, and at no Expence.

Thus for your better Conviction, I have condescended to mention every the minutest Thing, which I have heard you complain of, in this Affair. Let me therefore, in the Conclusion, remind you again, that with regard to your particular Station in Life, it admits of no Remedy; it is the established Order and Appointment of Providence. Some Difficulties, no doubt, does attend it, and what Mortal is without them? But shall the Thing formed say to him, that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? For since God, out of his free Bounty and Goodness, gave us Being at all; to him alone it must belong, of right, to fix every Man's natural Condition

dition in Life. Therefore we must take the Fare of this World patiently and contentedly, while God pleases to continue us in it.

WE know there is a better State appointed for us, where the weary shall be at Rest; where we shall never more hear the Voice of Sorrow; and where the Servant shall be for ever free from his Master. Hence whatever Part falls to your Share, at present, in Society, it is both your Duty and Interest to perform it well and chearfully. For the Laws of the Land are your greatest Security; when you use any Endeavours to undermine, or obstruct them; you are, in Reality, pulling with your own Hands, your Habitations over your Heads. Now your Magistrates only act under these very Laws, which are your grand Safeguard: They can neither add thereto, nor diminish therefrom: They are no more than the Servants of the Public, and the Ministers of God to thee for good: And in general, have only their Trouble for their Pay.

Now

Now do but divest yourselves of all Prejudice and Passion; and calmly view your own State, and the State of Society, in this Light, and what Foundation is there for the least Complaint? Would you have Governors and Magistrates, to guard your Lives and Properties; to plan and consult the Common-weal; to protect the Innocent, and to punish evil Doers?—Why, must they not then, in the very Nature of the Thing, be cloathed with proper Authority; and be endowed with suitable Abilities, to discharge faithfully this high Trust? What would be the Consequence therefore, if every private mean Man should take upon him to direct them herein; and if he was not humoured, to interrupt, by Force, that very Office, which you confess is so necessary to the Well-being of Society?

YOUR neighbouring Gentlemen, under whose Wings you dwell safely, and out of whose Fortunes you eat your daily Bread; these very Persons are appointed by the Government to be your Magistrates, to
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take Care of your Concerns, to advise you in your Affairs, and to protect you from Murder and Rapine. Now would you not have desired all this of Choice? Yet against these very Men, your Neighbours, your Landlords, your Friends and Protectors, did you lift up your rebellious Arm; and, O horrid! had well nigh been Assistants in spilling their innocent Blood. Indeed you may well startle at the dreadful Thought; and though it pleased Providence to guard, by a handful of brave Men, *their* useful Lives; yet alas! remember, innocent Blood was shed; and O that God may never require it at your Hands!

MANY of you, I should hope, were the least guilty in this sad Affair; yet you cannot but see to what horrid Excesses your *very Presence* gave Encouragement: O then repent you of your Folly; let this be a severe Warning to you throughout your whole future Lives: It may be a good Lesson, tho' bought alas! at a dear Price. "Submit yourselves therefore to every Ordinance of
" Man for the Lord's Sake: Whether it be

" to

“ to the King, as supreme; or unto Go-
 “ vernors as unto them who are sent by
 “ him for the Punishment of evil Doers;
 “ and for the Praise of them that do well.”
 1 *Pet.* ii. 13, 14.

MEDDLE not hereafter with Things
 above your Capacity; be humble and con-
 tent in your several Stations; and always
 consider yourselves in your different Cal-
 lings, as Fellow-workers with God, for
 the common Good and Benefit of Mankind.

A N D if our gracious Sovereign, (for a-
 gainst his Authority you properly rebelled)
 shall think fit, out of mere Mercy and
 Tenderneſs, to make but a *few Examples*
 among you, for ſuch a daring hainous
 Crime, be you, that eſcape, ever duly
 thankful, for the great and undeſerved Le-
 nity, that is ſhewn towards you. Remem-
 ber likewise, it is your Magiſtrates who
now ſtand in the Gap between you and
 Deſtruction: You clearly ſee the Power,
 they have, to revenge your late Affront:
 O let their forbearing Goodneſs then melt
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you down to Tears of Contrition; and let all the Days of your future Life be a constant living Proof of the Sincerity of your Repentance.

AND now may the gracious God, who has already saved you from so imminent Danger, keep you still under his Protection, and present you at last, washed and cleansed, before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding and never-fading Joy; for the Sake of his well-beloved Son, our all-gracious Redeemer and Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous. *Amen. Amen.*

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